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Associated Press

The Central Intelligence Agency yesterday dedicated its children's center in Langley, Va., and Barbara Bush played with one of the first enrollees. With them were William H. Webster, Director of Central Intelligence, and Clare Taylor, the center's program director.

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Where Hide-and-Seek Meets Cloak and Dagger

By MICHAEL WINES
Special to The New York Times

LANGLEY, Va., Nov. 13 — Under the alert eyes of Barbara Bush and the press, the Central Intelligence Agency finally lifted its blanket of secrecy today.

Beneath it were scores of cooing, gurgling babies.

With more fanfare than it customarily musters, the C.I.A. brought a busload of reporters to its headquarters as the First Lady dedicated the Langley Children's Center, the agency's first day-care unit for employees.

The $1.2 million concrete-and-stucco building, only steps from the agency's two main office buildings, is "the Company's" solution to a problem vexing many companies: keeping employees productive amid the demands of families with one parent or two careers.

The issue is especially important at the C.I.A., where disgruntled workers

A different 'company' provides child care for employees.

can spread more than gossip, and where the cost of hiring and training replacements can be astronomical.

"We try to hire most of our employees straight out of college, and most of them stay for a career," said George Owens, the C.I.A.'s director of personnel and chairman of the center's board of directors. With more than half the agency's workers hired in the last decade, the demand for child care is strong, he said.

In more ways than one, the C.I.A.'s day-care center is not your average nursery school.

For one thing, the 28 staff members had to undergo polygraphs, psychological examinations and rigorous background investigations before being hired. For another, the 104 children enrolled are identified in the center's records by first names and numbers, not last names, although the children and staff get to know complete names.

The List Is Classified

"The list of children enrolled here is classified," said Clare Taylor, the center's program director and cofounder. "Any list with more than three names of employees on it is classified."

A guard stands watch to insure that unauthorized parents do not infiltrate the building in the morning and that no child is picked up by hostile forces in the afternoon — unlikely events, since the building is well inside the agency's heavily fortified compound.

Behind the wall of confidentiality is a day-care center to envy: a $1.2 million playground that meets every child's need, from heated floors to crawl on to restrooms designed expressly for the shortest of little boys.

The sunny, brightly colored building is divided into three "pods," for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. Each opens onto a separate playground, and all three open onto an indoor commons for recreation when the weather is bad.

"This is not just a small elementary school," said the center's architect who, by agreement with the C.I.A., could not identify himself. "It's a unique facility designed for the needs of young children. It took tremendous cooperation from the agency to allow us to do it the way it needed to be done."

The agency chipped in more than good will. Under an agreement with the private, nonprofit corporation that runs the center, the C.I.A. donated the land, the building and the monthly cost of utilities. Fees from parents pay the staff and other operating costs. Parents pay from $95 to $130 a week, the going rate in the Washington area, and there is a waiting list of applicants.

The center, which opened in September but awaited Mrs. Bush's visit for a formal ribbon-cutting, was five years in the making, Mr. Owens and Ms. Taylor said, although C.I.A. officials had considered the idea since the early 1970's. Serious planning began after Congress authorized Federal agencies to offer space and services for day-care centers.

The First Lady, whose husband ran the C.I.A. under President Gerald R. Ford, was given a whirlwind tour of the building today and pronounced it and its children state-of-the-art.

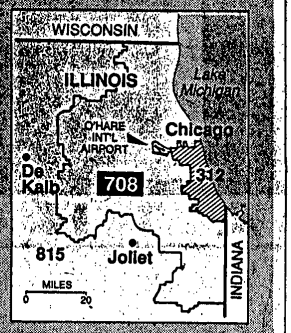
Caring for the Future

"Aren't they fabulous!" she said during a stop in the infant pod, where she cuddled Catherine and Jake, who promptly emitted a loud wail.

In later remarks to a crowd of agency employees, William H. Webster, the Director of Central Intelligence, called the center "a model for all Federal agencies," and added: "We think a lot about the future; it's our job. And I think the center shows we're thinking a lot about our own future."

Then he and Mrs. Bush left, the crowd munched on cookies and sipped coffee, and the kids went back to what kids do in day care, with exceptions. "We don't have field trips," said Leslie Switzer, the center's director. "Nothing leaves the center."

New Area Code In Illinois



A new area code, 708, went into effect Nov. 11 for Chicago's suburbs. Area Code 312 still applies for the city of Chicago, including O'Hare Airport.

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CAPITAL LINE

USA TODAY'S BRIEFING ON WASHINGTON

PEOPLE WATCH

▶ **Barbara Bush** donned her fuzzy slippers to join the fun when the CIA opened its child care center. Looking on: CIA Director **William Webster**; **Claire Taylor**, project manager

By Barry Thumma, AP

AT CIA CENTER: Barbara Bush welcomes an unidentified child.

▶ National GOP Chairman **Lee Atwater** says the name of the game for Republicans in 1990 is redistricting. "If we come out of the 1990 elections without more Republican governors and state legislators, the Democrats will draw us out of the pie," he told GOP governors meeting in Hilton Head, S.C. "They will draw up a deck to stack against us and we will have to draw off that deck into the next millenium."

▶ **Sens. Richard Bryan**, D-Nev.; **Howard Metzenbaum**, D-Ohio; **Alan Cranston**, D-Calif.; **Tim Wirth**, D-Colo.; and **Brock Adams**, D-Wash. — all from states with nuclear weapons plants — urged **President Bush** to withdraw his nomination of **Victor Stello Jr.** as chief manager of those plants. His Senate confirmation hearing is set for Wednesday. Some environmental groups and House members say Stello is unqualified to oversee plant safety.

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